

SENATE JUDICIARY

Exhibit No. 13

Date: 3/26/15

Bill No. HB 477

March 26, 2015

To: Montana Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Matthew Brower, Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference

Re: Testimony in support of HB 477

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Matt Brower [B R O W E R] and I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference. Today I speak on behalf of the two Roman Catholic bishops in Montana from the Diocese of Helena and the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.

I am here today to voice our support for House Bill 477.

The Montana Catholic Conference remains steadfast in our opposition to physician-assisted suicide and therefore strongly supports House Bill 477. Assisted suicide represents misguided public policy, which would have detrimental implications for all of society. For example, we believe that permitting physician-assisted suicide sends the wrong message to the young people of our state where we already have one of the highest suicide rates in the country.

There has been much confusion about the state of the law regarding physician-assisted suicide in Montana following the decision in *Baxter v. Montana*. While there are those who argue that physician-assisted suicide is legal in our state, we, and many others, disagree. With House Bill 477 you have the opportunity to clarify that Montana law prohibits physician-assisted suicide.

For many of the reasons that you have heard or will hear today we stand in strong support of House Bill 477 which will help make it clear that Montana does not allow physician-assisted suicide. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the Montana Catholic Conference, I urge a "do pass" and thank you for your time.